

family **Spirit**

May - June 1985

WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER



Cana

From the editors . . . with Love!

Dear Lovers,

The Miracle of Cana! What a beautiful time of the year to reflect on this story from Scripture. It is true indication that Scripture is a loveletter from our Father! Fr. Ronn sets the scene perfectly in his Cana article and one can almost see Jesus' total absorption in this couple and His love and tenderness as He quietly performs His first miracle!

This is the time of year for many of us to attend weddings of dear ones. And this issue will give you much reflection and insight into your own relationship and romance with each other and with your Lord! We, as the editors felt privileged to write for this issue - Fr. Ronn in his Cana article and ours in the Weekend Connection. There are many challenges for you in this issue to continue to grow and to change. Of course there is always the tendency to leave them as "nice words on a page" but we encourage you to make them your own through your dialogue!

We found it really neat, as a family to get into family history and revisit old events through pictures and mementos. Our kids loved it. Why don't you do the same!

We certainly hope our Section Editors are covering the Section Conventions that are dotting the nation this summer!! We sure hope someone will take in all the new subscriptions for us at your conventions!! You camera buffs, take those pictures at the Convention and send them in to us!

We've heard from a number of you that you are having difficulty receiving the magazine! We are checking our lists and are in the process of shifting from bulk mailing to second class. We hope that will alleviate the problem. Continue to let us know if you have a problem.

Is there a couple in Australia and Canada that would be willing to receive a box of magazines for their subscribers and mail them within those countries? It is costing us a great deal to mail to these countries at this time. Please let us hear from you if you are interested!

We ask your prayers for our family as we draw closer to the birth of our fifth child. We are tremendously excited about this birth and especially so because of the anticipation and joy of our older children. Our dialogues lately have been on dreams. Peg is a vivid dreamer and we have really gotten into some deep feelings from her dreams.

We carry all of you in our hearts and prayers!

We love you!!

Ps. We still don't have a suitable WP name for this babe!!



Fr. Ronn Barton, Peggy & Bugs White

*We love you!
Bugs, Peg & Fr. Ronn*

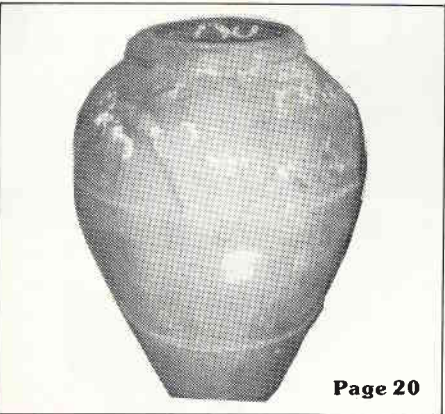
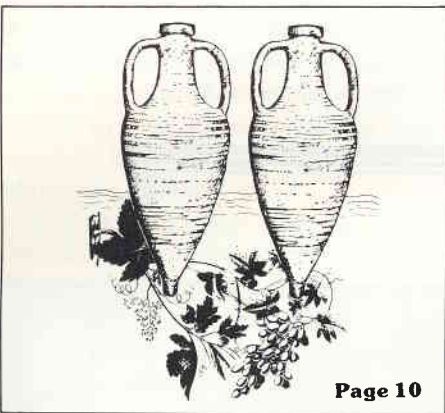
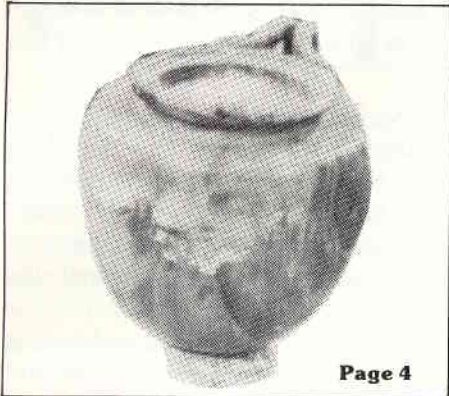
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Our Covers: Vincent Anthony Bruno and Angela Scarritt (Peg's grandparents) were married June 12, 1918 at St. Michael's Church, Pensacola, Florida. Known and loved by all as Gramp & Gram, they were married 58 years before Gram's death. Gramp is now 91 years old and sharp as ever judging by his article on page 24!

On the back cover is Katherine Lillian Wilson White (Bugs' grandmother) on her wedding day November 27, 1912, Sacred Heart Church, Pensacola, Florida





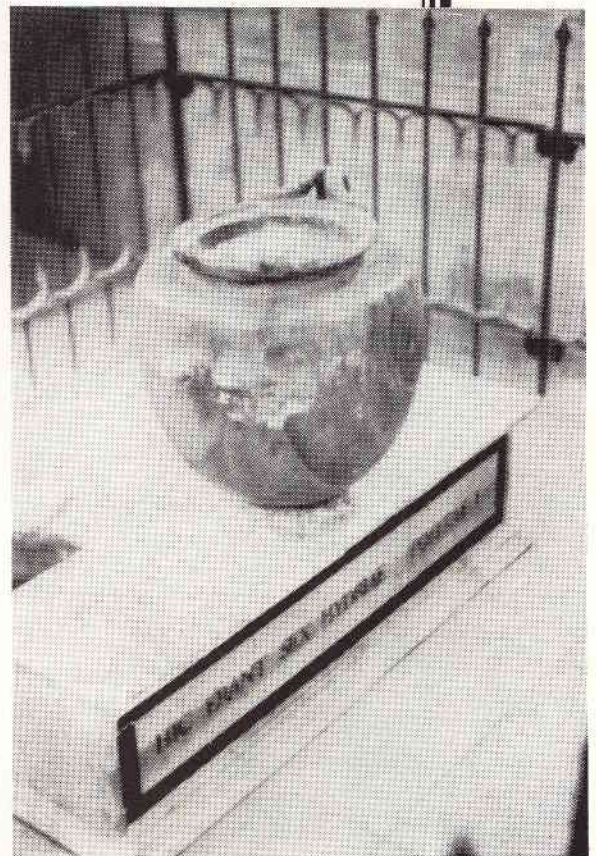
What's Happening

About two years ago we went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with our good buddies B & J Burmeister. Imagine the feelings that came out when we found ourselves in Cana of Galilee. As we entered the Church and looked toward the altar a familiar sight caught our eye. There hanging under the feet of Our Lady's statue was an M.E. banner from Quebec. This sign of flesh and blood lovers of today in the midst of mosaics depicting the feast and

miracle from 2000 years ago is really a trip. We have put ourselves into that famous wedding feast, in this very town so many Saturday nights that just being in there was heady stuff. But seeing that Logo brought tears to our eyes and gave us goose bumps. It was like finding a bit of a treasure from your childhood and reliving the fond memories that come with it.

We feel so akin to those couples from Quebec whose names were printed on that banner, and to all married couples. We felt very humbled that they cared enough to give their testimony of Matrimony for one and all to see in this holy spot.

This month of reading and writing has been a special time for Ken and me to remember that beautiful Pilgrimage with Fr. Paul Bughagiar. It was a time of living a dream - to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.



A Visit to Cana in Galilee



by Jan & Ken Kenlon

While we're talking of travels we just got word that the 1986 NATIONAL CONVENTION has been set for July 18-20, at the University of South Florida in Tampa. It's not too early to start thinking of making a vacation out of it and sightsee all around Florida, our beautiful state.

Heard a story about a couple who was wearing a tag that said "We've done it for 120 days in a row." What are they doing you say? Why, dialoguing, of course. That sure is a call to others to join in and discover one another. (From the Spirit of the North, Minnesota Edition)

Just a note from Don & Judy Schoen of Minnesota. From the report they got from Kathy Donahue, people are really noticing the bank flasher at Liberty State Bank on Snelling Ave. in St. Paul. Of course it is advertising Marriage Encounter--one day a month--the first Monday of every month--free for as long as we want. All it took was five minutes, to inquire and get it set up at our bank....try to do it and see what happens!

Mom & Dad, need some time alone, babysitters you can trust? Read this from Anniston, Alabama:

When was the last time you had a relaxing, romantic, candlelight dinner with your spouse? Well, without relatives nearby...we have had few opportunities for just us...but we found a solution. We call another couple and give them the dialogue question, "HDIF planning a romantic evening with you?" We tell them to dialogue, and to call us back. Then we offer to keep their children overnight so that they can enjoy a romantic evening together....Naturally, we expect them to keep our children at a later date! What a great idea. Thanks Jack & Sharon.

Area I has been looking for ideas on

how to inform couples in our parishes about M.E. Queen of Apostles parish came up with a unique idea. The couples in a love circle there have been secretly compiling a wide range of couples from different parish organizations and age groups. Their hope is to culminate in an information/social evening where they will share their dreams of M.E. and in turn listen to the other couples share their dreams for the parish and themselves. Try it in your parish; reach out and share your dream. (From the Capitol Spirit).

All of us have been given special gifts and talents. Here's a way to share these with others and help our Church at the same time. The couples from N.E. Kansas set up a HONEY-DO day at the Monastery. The monastery had no trouble coming up with a long list of Honey-do jobs. It was a family day with work in the morning, a family lunch out on the grounds, work in the afternoon closing with a family Mass at the end of the day. Talk it over with your community!

Tampa Bay area boasts the most number of weekends monthly per year! But that's not all they also say they have the most number of participants on each weekend and the most number of teams (36 couples and 2 priests) in the entire nation! Hey out there - is this true?? If so we congratulate Tampa Bay area and especially Fr. Holy, Huggable Harry Brown for their recruiting success!

One thing we notice as we read through the stack of newsletters is that this is a time of transition. New Leadership is spreading throughout the board. We wish to congratulate all the new leaders! May Our Lord bless you and give you strength to live your commitment. We wish to thank all you "Old Timers" and wish you well as you move on to more adventures !

Section Conventions

SECTIONS 1,2,3
Newark, New Jersey
June 28-30

Sections 4,5
Atlanta, Georgia
July 5-7

Sections 6,7
Purdue University
August 2-4

Section 8
Pierre, So. Dakota
August 16-18

Section 9
Boulder, Colorado
August 9-11

Section 10
Dallas, Texas
August 2-4

Section 11,12
Los Angeles, Ca.
July 26-28

Section 13
Seattle/Tacoma, Wa.
June 28-30

Section 14
Los Angeles, Ca.
August 2-4

Section 15
Late July

Section 16 - North

Newark, New Jersey
June 28-30

Section 16 - South
Atlanta, Georgia
July 5-7



Fr. Dick Reis, Barbara & Frank Jelinek

hear the Scripture passage about the Wedding Feast of Cana, I think not only of things that apply to us as a couple, but also of a call to relationship with others in our lives. Jesus, His Mother and his disciples were present at the celebration because they were friends who cared a great deal for the bride and groom. The intimate personal relationship was important. I know how much Barbara and I need the affirmation and the caring of others, a sense of being important in someone else's life. The whole world needs that, actually longs for it. It would be wonderful if everyone could experience this affirmation in their everyday lives with others, not just at weddings, or graduations or family gather-

Cana —

The Beginning Of

"Jesus performed this first of his signs at Cana in Galilee. Thus did he reveal his glory, and his disciples believed in him." (John 2:1-11)

For those of us whose lives are committed to the renewal of the Sacrament of Matrimony, a reflection on the first eleven verses of the second chapter of John's Gospel might well center, not so much on the marvelous happening described there, as on the placement of the account by the author. We might see special significance in the fact that the account of the wedding feast follows immediately upon John's story of the calling of the first disciples in the latter part of Chapter 1. At the close of that narrative, Nathanael is deeply impressed because Jesus knew that Philip had called him from under the fig tree. For this wondrous bit of clairvoyance, Nathanael acknowledges Jesus as "Son of God" and "King of Israel". Jesus responds: "Do you believe just because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than that."

One might well see that statement of

Jesus as setting the stage for the remainder of John's Gospel - the story of the "greater things than that" the revelation of "the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." And the first of these "greater things" is the story of the Wedding Feast at Cana.

The Wedding Feast is a chosen moment for Jesus. It is a time deliberately picked to "reveal His glory". It is not in the palace halls of an earthly prince or in the lush gardens of a wealthy man that Jesus first inspires faith in his disciples. The worldly wise might choose to set out on a course of action designed to change the world before the eyes of the rich, the powerful and the influential. Not Jesus. He performs the "first of his signs" to help avoid embarrassment for good friends - a poor, newly married couple in a tiny town in Galilee, of which no one would ever have heard, had it not been for his caring. "Greater things" had begun to happen and they had begun in the lives of a married couple and their friends.

Frank: When I, as husband read or

ings. Special events do give us an experience of closeness. Even the Olympics '84 produced moments of closeness for the American people -for example, a teary eyed bond of pride and joy as Mary Lou vaulted to a perfect 10. But we need others in our lives, not just for a moment, but for the entire journey.

Another thing that strikes me about this story is the saving of the "best wine" for last. I apply that to my relationship with Barbara. Thanks to the dialoguing lifestyle we have tried so hard to live, I can honestly say that the pains and joys of our journey have led us to a richer and smoother "wine". And, the Lord willing, we will become a vintage couple.

Barbara: Today, as a wife, I'm in touch with the hopes and dreams that were alive in me at our wedding feast on June 24, 1961. That day was the beginning of my new life as Frank's wife.

During our years together there have been other significant beginnings in our journey in love and faith to grow more

deeply in love and appreciation of each other. It would be incomplete to ignore those times when I set myself apart and settled for compatibility and strove for independence. Yet, the loneliness that resulted was the push to recapture the belief that I had in us. It has been a profound lived experience of being given opportunities for more new beginnings. When Jesus chose to perform "this first of his signs" at Cana, I think he made a statement to us all about the importance of our marriages. I find great strength in believing that we are important to him and that he is always ready to help us when we invite him into our lives. My life as a wife is enriched by this realization of the importance of our life to others.

is found, at least in part, in the opportunities it has presented to me for the renewal of my own priesthood and growth in relationship with the people who have called me to be their priest. But, perhaps even more, the past seven years have called me to look at what had been, for many years, a neglected area in my priesthood. I have been conscious of the many times I have bemoaned the sad state of marriage in our world today and "tsked" over relationships in Matrimony that are less than I judged they ought to be. I'm mindful of how often I heard that voice: "They have no wine" and said to myself: "somebody should do something".

The story of the Marriage Feast at

Cana reminds me that maybe I'm somebody!"

Fr. Dick

Frank Barbara

Barbara & Frank Jelinek are our National Secretariat Team for Worldwide Marriage Encounter. Currently they are serving with newly elected Fr. Bill Dilgen. Fr. Dick Reis, our former National Secretariat Team Priest has resumed pastoral duties in his diocese of Columbus, Ohio.

Great Things

by Fr. Dick Reis,

Frank & Barbara Jelinek

Fr. Dick: For me, as a priest, the involvement of Jesus in the married life of this couple from Cana in Galilee, present a continuing challenge. It is so easy for me to opt out of real involvement in the marriages of others. After all, it's their marriage, I've got my own Sacrament to worry about! I'll settle for preaching, counseling and advising when I'm asked. Then I've done my duty. How easily I forget that my own call to a Sacramental way of life as a priest is, in itself, a call to a special care and devotion for the married couple. Long ago I learned that the Church is "the custodian of the Sacraments". And isn't that couple one of them? My task is not over when the wedding ceremony is over. In fact, it's just begun. They have just become a Sacrament. If I am to be responsible as a priest, I can no more forget that than I can forget the wafers I have just consecrated. The key to their Sacramentality - their relationship - cannot be treated by me with any less care than the tabernacle key.

The beauty of the Encounter for me,





Fighting

THE OZZIE & HARRIET SYNDROME

by Rusty & Myra Brunner

" You're driving fast like that ON PURPOSE, aren't you? *!...just to make me mad, right?!"

(SILENCE)

" Well, are we gonna fight this thing out?! Or are you just gonna sit there and pretend I don't exist?!"

(SILENCE)

" Well?!"

(SILENCE)

W H A M !!

Now, if you've ever been smacked up the side of the head with a notebook, then you know how those tiny little spirals can make funny little creases next to your ear. But a wallop with a spiral binder is the very least of the ways "peace-at-any-price" can be destructive to our marriage.

Our courtship was filled with spats. I think we even argued over where to go on our first date. Seems like we just couldn't agree on anything. And what made it worse, and even more embarrassing, is that all around us we saw couples who looked like they were auditioning for the "Ozzie & Harriet" show; gentle, placid little munchkins who rarely if ever raised their voices or uttered a cross word to one another.

So everytime we'd disagree or have a spat, especially in public, we'd berate ourselves and compare ourselves to all those "good marriages." "How come WE can't be peaceful and happy like Dick and Jane? THEY never fight."

And on our wedding day, we could almost "hear" the unspoken whispers...from both sides of the aisle: "They'll never make it." "We give them 6 months, tops!" "They fight like cats and dogs, those two."

That was 22 years ago. Today, all around us, we see marriages crumbling, and munchkins in divorce court: Myra's mom and dad, her brother, mine too, and dozens of our friends. Meanwhile we're still together, still madly in love, still fighting like cats and dogs.

No, it's not that OUR marriage is "strong enough to withstand those arguments." Just the opposite. We believe our arguing, rather than bottling things up, actually strengthens our marriage.

And guess what? The experts are finally beginning to agree with us turkeys.

A recent study found that one major difference between marriages that fail and those that make it is...you guessed it... "arguing and fighting." No, not in the failures, but in the stable, long-lasting ones. Over the years we've discovered (the hard way) that holding in bitterness, resentments and hurts is like strong dynamite in the cellar next to the furnace. One day the smallest spark will set off an explosion.

Their's little difference between 2 people in relationship, and 2 DOZEN people in relationship...except that the tensions are even greater.

We encountered couples and priests, trained to share our feelings... we more

than anyone should recognize the value of good, fair fighting, to clear the air and relieve those tensions. But, it seems like nowhere else on earth do we find such a "fear of fighting" as in a Marriage Encounter community. Just as Rusty and Myra, the couple so often wear the mask of Qzzie & Harriett; so also, whole communities too often put on the mask of the gentle, peaceful, chummy social club in which everyone always gets along and no one argues. E'gad!...the "Brady Bunch!"

Peace is nice. But "peace-at-any-price"...not so nice. It can be as destructive to the life of a community as it can be to our marriage. Spats within a Community structure, like those in our marriage, often reflect the passion of its members to fight for their values, for survival, and for growth.

And forgive us for saying this; but our beautiful, well-meaning priests, trained to be peace-makers, are often too quick to play referee...too quick to insist on prayer and reconciliation services, healing and condescending pats on the back. When what we just might need, right here and now, is a good, old-fashioned "knock-down, drag-out!"

I (Rusty) can even now still remember my first real "nose-bleeder." Bobby McGuire and I, both about 9 years

old...we beat one another half silly over ownership of a cat's-eye marble. But, from that day on we were best of friends.

Now, don't get us wrong. We're not endorsing "beating one another silly" as therapeutic. But we see a lot of value in confrontation and good, fair fighting when necessary.

Over the past 10 years we've watched helplessly as many teams and leaders "dropped out" in disillusionment: "We expect a Christian community to be loving and gentle. We simply can't live with bickering and fighting!"

Thank God the FIRST Christian community COULD! Saints Peter and Paul were ardent political opponents. They fought for their values and argued violently over their implementation. And what about Jesus himself? Like most Catholics we grew up praying for the "peace of Christ" to a plaster-of-Paris Jesus complete with angelic smile and fluorescent halo. The REAL Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter's son...his life was ANYTHING BUT "Peaceful." Herod's soldiers tried to kill him before he was even 2 years old. He took a whip to money-changers in the temple. He fought, argued, challenged authority, criticized pharisees and scribes, and argued constantly with his own apostles. And then, finally, he clashed with Romans who hauled him off to jail, whipped, and crucified him. "Peace???" Sounds more like "passion" than "peace," huh?

Our point? Well, we think "fighting" has gotten a bum rap in our society today, even among us encountered folks. No, "especially" among us encountered folks. Now, we're not endlessly fighting just for the sake of fighting. That's silly. But we ARE 100% behind fighting...for the sake of us, our community, our Church, our values. Because, everytime we "refuse" to fight, at a Community meeting or in our own bedroom, we bottle up hurts and resentments. That's like brushing dirt under the rug. And somewhere down the road we're going to end up tripping over that lump in the carpet. And when we do...W H A M !!... "funny little creases!"



Those of us who are validly married in the Catholic Church often believe that we have received a sacrament, the Sacrament of Matrimony. That seems to imply that saying our vows before the priest on our wedding day caused us to receive some sort of holy zap that makes us husband and wife and loaded us up with magic stuff called grace that helps us get through the tough days.

We'd like to talk about matrimony. Grace is also a good topic, but it will have to wait for another time.

We might do well to start using a new terminology. We didn't RECEIVE a sacrament, but we ARE sacrament. That means that in saying our vows before the priest AND the community we began to make Bob and Rita a sacrament. We promised to love and cherish each other, not just for our sake, but so the whole community would have a sign that Jesus' love is alive in the world. At the time we

Funded also has a simple meaning. It means that the love between us must be real. We can't be fighting and out of sorts with each other all the time at home and put on a smiling, hand-holding routine when we leave the house. If our love is funded, the joy in us will show as we go to communion together or walk down the street in our neighborhood. It means that we are real. We can act naturally and the love and joy we have will be there for all to see.

Some couples like to use their lack of togetherness as an excuse for staying home and not being involved, but that's shirking our responsibility as a sacramental couple. We promised our Church that we would be lovers for them, so our responsibility now is to get ourselves together, to change our life-style, so that we can be genuine lovers.

The theologians also say that a sacrament should be received and effica-

Living God's Plan

by Bob & Rita Boeke

weren't aware of that, but we should have been. We should have been aware that we were saying to the whole Church that we will be lovers all our lives so that each person can believe in the love Jesus has for him or her.

That's quite a responsibility and a challenge for us. It says that we must stay head over heels in love with each other, not just because that's good for us, but also because the community of believers called the Church needs us to be lovers, is counting on each couple to keep them aware of the love their God has for them.

It's a challenge for us to live so that our love is alive and real and visible to those who see us. Theologians use the words visible and funded. Visible means that Bob and Rita can't be sacrament if all we do is sit in our home and watch TV. Being sacrament means that we have to be involved with the community of the Church. We have to be seen or we are no sign.

cious. The big word is efficacious. This is where we find the joy in being a sacramental couple. It's hard to explain, but when we are head over heels in love with each other, we affect the people around us in positive ways. Our love is efficacious, it picks others up and carries them along. It reminds us of the words of the song, "Everybody loves a lover!" We become contagious in an awesome and beautiful way. We find this to be one of God's mysteries, but our experience tells us that it is true.

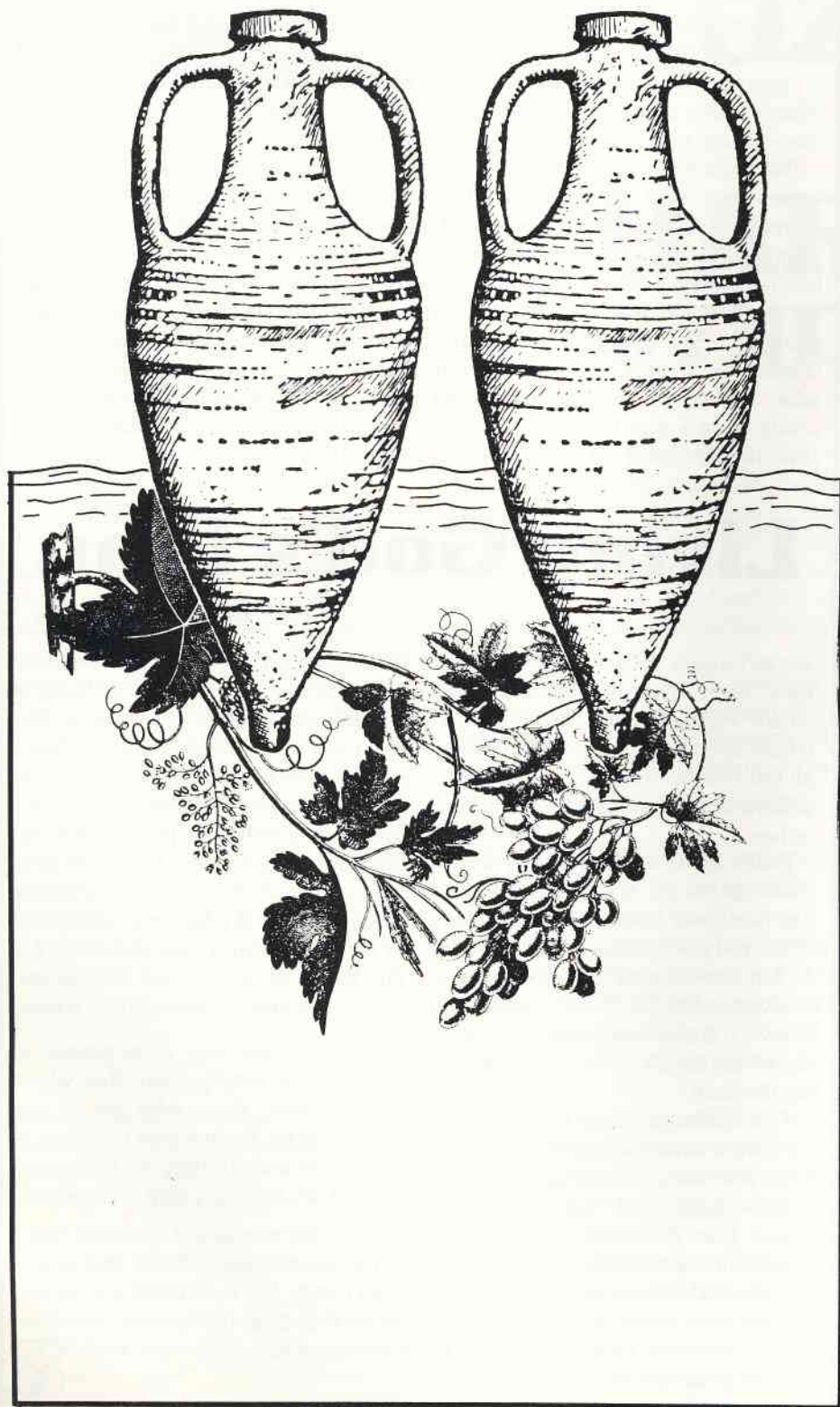
When we say that a sacrament is received, we simply mean that when we are lovers, those who see us are affected by us. Even if their response is negative or jealous, they will be moved by us. They just can't help themselves.

Living as sacrament is scary, fun, joyful, mysterious, difficult and many other things. It is hard to tell you all the things that it is, but we can say this: living as sacrament is really living!



Cana Means Change

From Existence To



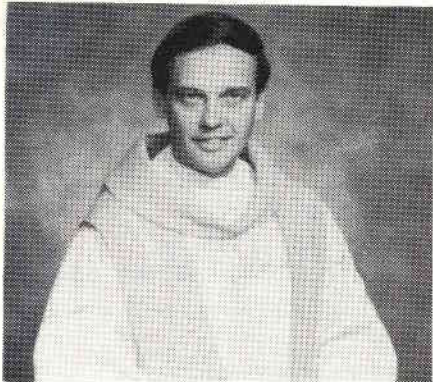
The morning had broken with bursts of sunlight. All the grass and flowers perked up as the dew refreshed their springtime youth. The air was laced with the sweetest smells: honeysuckle, jasmine and the distant scent of the lilac drifted down to the verdant lawn. The huge tent flapped gently in the April breeze and the fragile clang of china and crystal echoed through the air. The lined tables had been set for 250 people and every table was filled save for the one in the far corner set for 13.

Miriam was a beautiful bride, as radiant as the noonday sun and as demure as the soft moonlight. She was finally wed to her beloved Josh! He was handsome in his formal attire and he set the tone for every man in the house. As they circulated around the crowded tent - friends and relatives danced for joy - given courage by the flow of liquid spirits and enticed by the sound of the 'wraparound' wedding band. Even Aunt Sophie cut a rug as she gleefully reeled Uncle Amos around the floor.

Then it happened! The eyes of Miriam and Josh lighted up with new sparkle as they pushed their way to the entrance to greet the last guests to arrive. Miriam knew that He would come. They had been friends since they were children - wasn't He the one who taught her how to carve figures out of wood to pass the time away? She remembered all the kind things He had done for her family, comforting Grandma when Gramps had died, rebuilding the barn after that terrible storm and making that rocking for Dad's birthday...

He had always been there. He was even the one who first introduced Josh to her. Josh was His best friend - and now Josh was her beloved spouse. She was glad that He was there - now everything was complete. As they reached the doorway, she and Josh

The Wine of Living



Fr. Ronn

threw their arms around Jesus and kissed Him happily on the cheek. Jesus was bubbling over with happiness as He embraced them both. They were His friends and He delighted to see them so happy together.

All eyes were now on the three childhood friends as they made their way to the empty table. The people recognized Jesus as Mary's son and began to share wonderful stories of Him - they all listened for what He would say - they all wanted to get nearer and share in that visible joy. But Jesus led Miriam and Josh to the center of the dance floor and made them dance together as He slipped back to His table to watch. All eyes focused on the new couple - people saw them and remembered when they started out like that....

They remembered and this beaming couple became a sign - a visible sign that stirred the memories of all present - a deep smile of hope spread under that tent as they all began to look for and look at the spouse they had married long ago.

Jesus had come because He could not stay away - they were His friends and He needed to be present to them to help them focus on one another. They felt loving... encouraged... excited. Jesus did a wonderful thing for them.



By Fr. Ronn Barton, O.M.I.

John 2:3-11

At a certain point the wine ran out, and Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine." Jesus replied, "Woman, how does this concern of yours involve me? My hour has not yet come." His mother instructed those waiting on table, "Do whatever he tells you." As prescribed for Jewish ceremonial washings, there were at hand six stone water jars, each one holding fifteen to twenty-five gallons. "Fill those jars with water," Jesus ordered, at which they filled them to the brim. "Now," he said, "draw some out and take it to the waiter in charge." They did as he instructed them. The waiter in charge tasted the water made wine, without knowing where it had come from; only the waiters knew; since they had drawn the water. Then the waiter in charge called the groom over and remarked to him: "People usually serve the choice wine first; then when the guests have been drinking awhile, a lesser vintage. What you have done is keep the choice wine until now.

Jesus performed this first of his signs at Cana in Galilee. Thus did he reveal his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

Because of how they experienced Jesus, the waiters and partygoers came to believe in him as the Lord. If only we were more aware of his presence to us in the ordinary moments of our living, the moments when we feel hurt, disillusioned, used, unimportant or just blah! The water of simple existence is changed into the wine of living when we can see beyond these moments. Happenings and situations don't go away and our feelings don't always change but the awareness of the truth that is bigger than the feelings of a moment can make a difference in how I react and in what direction I take in response to the persons in my life.

It is my conviction that if married lovers spoke their word to each other every day - the ordinary time would be grounded in a subconscious purpose. If our purpose and life meaning were more conscious than our memory would not be so slow and our zenith of acceptance would not be so limited.

Every day to focus the value of our marriage:

"I take you to be my spouse and my lover from this day forward, to have and to hold in good times and in bad; in sickness and in health. I choose to love you and to honor you all the days of my life.

I take you for who you are today and who you will become tomorrow and I do this in the name of our God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

With this bond etched in our hearts fresh on our lips and resounding in our ears, could we not taste the wine of life that would ordinarily be like water?

"But Father, I'm too busy... it becomes boring to do it every week or everyday... maybe I'll just save it for the crisis times!? and... hope I remember the words...?"

